

Approved: May 19, 2014

Amherst Finance Committee Minutes
Wednesday, April 30, 2014 6:15 PM
Music Room, Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School

ATTENDANCE:

Kay Moran (Chair), Janice Ratner, Anurag Sharma, Douglas Slaughter, Sarah Swartz, Marylou Theilman (Vice-Chair)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sandy Pooler, Finance Director; John Musante, Town Manager; David Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Conservation and Development; Amherst Media

Meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm.

AGENDA AND DISCUSSION

1. Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles - consideration of committee recommendations on Articles deferred until Town Meeting and reconsideration of recommendations on other Articles as necessary

Article 20, Part C (Community Preservation Act, Affordable Housing, Preservation of Affordable Units at Rolling Green) was discussed. Musante and Ziomek met with the Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) last week to update them on the ongoing negotiations regarding maintaining affordable units at Rolling Green. CPAC voted to amend Article 20, Part C to increase the amount in the Article, \$750,000, to \$1,250,000, for the acquisition and preservation of affordable units at Rolling Green, an increase of \$500,000. This amount will be borrowed and paid back over 20 years using CPA dollars. This will only happen if the preservation of affordable housing occurs by the acquisition buyer. The number of units may increase from the current 41 units.

Town Meeting will be considering this new CPAC article at the June 2 Special Town Meeting. Only the dollar amount is expected to change. If the new article passes, the current Article 20, Part C will be dismissed. If it does not pass, the current article will be voted upon. Slaughter stated and the Finance Committee agreed that we not vote on this new proposed article until we see the actual warrant article wording. We would not have to do another write up, however, because it is still an appropriate use of CPA funds.

The Town will be partnering with the state and private equity to accomplish this acquisition and preservation. All contributors will be paying more, according to Musante. The state is providing guidance on funding levels and moving forward. Sharma calculated that the price per unit in the current article would be about \$18,000. In the proposed new article, that price per unit would be about \$30,000. This is still less than the cost of creating new units. The Town would not own the units but would have permanent affordability.

Article 19, Watershed Land Purchase is expected to be brought back at the June 2 Special Town Meeting, also. The Town was awaiting word on receiving a grant for this purchase from the state and after originally being told that they would not be getting the grant, they learned last Monday that they would. The Town needs to clarify which parcels would be

purchased. As the description of the parcels is different from the current article, the scope of the article is also different. So, a new article will be written.

A new **Inclusionary Zoning Article** to replace the current **Article 24** is also supposed to be included on the June 2 Warrant. There will be a Public Hearing on the revised article on May 7.

Article 21, Social Services Funding will be recommended to be dismissed as this spending was voted into the Community Services budget.

Article 22, Free Cash - It was moved and voted, 6-0, to recommend an appropriation of \$125,000 from Free Cash to fund the Community Services budget, barring any other changes to the budget.

2. Other matters contained within FY15 budget

There was a brief discussion on confusion regarding where money comes from to fund the budget items and prioritizing capital items such as buildings.

3. New information affecting budget - none

4. Member reports - liaisons, committees

Pooler distributed copies of the FY14 Municipal Budget/Actual Reports for Quarter Ending March 31, 2014. He discussed the revenues which are on track. He mentioned motor vehicle excise, other department revenue (Medicare Part D which is going to OPEB), the hotel/motel tax, and property tax collections. On the expense side, both Information Technology and Employee benefits have encumbrances which make them look higher. The snow and ice budget is showing a deficit due to the difficult winter. The department will try to find savings in other areas of the budget to help reduce this budget. This deficit is one of the reasons for the budget amendment which added money to the Reserve Fund.

5. Minutes of previous meetings - The minutes of April 24, 2014 were approved as amended by a vote of 5-0-1 abstaining. The abstention was from a committee member who was absent for this meeting. Amendments included adding a list of documents and a couple of spelling errors.

6. Next Meeting and Agenda - The Finance Committee may meet before the next Town Meeting session, Monday, May 5. The summer meeting of the Finance Committee is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, July 10.

7. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours in advance of meeting - None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Janice Ratner, acting clerk

Documents used:

Finance Committee Report and Recommendations to the 256th Annual Town Meeting
FY14 Municipal Budget/Actual Reports for Quarter Ending March 31, 2014

